

Before Medicare, many of us can remember relatives, friends and neighbors that struggled to pay medical bills in our retirement. I remember a family down the street that was a mother and father and a very young boy, and there was a grandmother and aunt that lived in the same house. The grandmother got sick. I well remember it, because it was the talk of the neighborhood. What were they going to do. They only had limited savings. Eventually what happened was they lost their home.

So it is fitting that our Nation should remember and honor Medicare's past as we in Congress prepare to determine Medicare's future. It is important that we remember what Medicare means to every American as we bring changes to the program.

The budget recently passed by Congress calls for cutting Medicare \$270 billion. This reduction will be three times larger than any other cut or any other change in the Medicare system. Thus far my concerns are twofold: First, how much of the \$270 billion in Medicare cuts could be averted if Congress was not going to do the change of \$245 billion in tax changes in the IRS Code? Second, are advocates being less than forthright when they say the plan will save Medicare?

Everything I have heard to date suggests that we are talking about pushing the solvency date back a couple of years. This is very, very important. But I think we should look at the whole situation. We know that there are Medicare changes that have to be made. Let us make sure we do not have Medicare changes that do not have to be made because the money is going to be used in another way.

Of course, we are still waiting for specific legislation that will implement these massive changes. Unfortunately, it is becoming increasingly clear that we will not see a real proposal until well into September, leaving us little chance to truly consider the large overhaul we should do in Medicare to make sure it is protected into the future.

While it took years to enact the Medicare system, and that history has been written and rewritten, some now seem to want to radically change the program in a matter of weeks. It seems unwise at best to consider fundamental changes in a program that provides health care for 37 million people, with little real opportunity to study and look at what the changes that are being advanced will do. If proposed changes to Medicare make sense, then they can stand the scrutiny of Congress and the American public. But the American people do not want to have a stealth system come in and not know what is going to happen until it has happened.

In keeping with the 30th anniversary of Medicare, let us remember President Johnson's words 30 years ago when he signed that Medicare bill and declared no longer will older Americans be denied the healing miracle of modern medicine, and no longer will this Na-

tion refuse the hand of justice to those who have given a lifetime of service, wisdom and labor to the progress of this progressive country.

We have to remember those words because what all of us want to be sure of is that the Medicare system is there for those people over 65. It has been there, it has been a good program, it should remain there. Let us be very careful what we do.

HONORING ATOMIC VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. ROTH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROTH. Mr. Speaker, this past Sunday we commemorated the distinguished service of an elite group of Americans, very brave Americans. They were not the Green Berets or the Navy Seals. They are not remembered for their service on the battlefield. Yet they served in some of the most extreme of wartime conditions.

I am talking about our atomic veterans, those soldiers who were exposed to radiation during Government experiments after World War II, before the full effects of the exposure of radiation were known.

The Second World War has ended a long 50 years ago. For many of the other veterans, they were spared the fatal shrapnel or the bayonet or the rifle fire. But for the soldiers who were exposed to atomic weapons experiments, the battle continues. Today, they fight against cancer and other diseases that resulted from the nuclear exposure.

As we remember those who died 50 years ago when the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we also must take a moment to remember the veterans who were involved in these nuclear testings of weapons. It is clear as a bell that we have a special obligation to these fearless men.

The VA has cared for these veterans, but their authority to do so expired on June 30. The VA continues to treat our atomic veterans, with the understanding that Congress will come through with legislation to extend their treatment authority. The House has passed the bill, H.R. 1565, to extend VA's obligation to treat atomic veterans through 1997. On behalf of the atomic veterans, I now urge the other body, the Senate, to vote to extend the VA's obligation to treat these brave men who need and deserve the best possible care available.

This past Sunday we recognized atomic veterans on Atomic Veterans Day. Veterans of northeast Wisconsin, including people like Jack DeMoulin of De Pere, WI, who has worked so hard and selflessly on behalf of the atomic veterans, they are the real heroes of the cold war.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot forget our atomic veterans. They were the ultimate guinea pigs in a new technology

whose power of destruction was well-known, but whose long-range health consequences was not. We must lift the burden from the shoulders of dedicated soldiers like Jack DeMoulin and the other atomic veterans.

The war has ended, but the atomic veterans, for them the battle rages on. Let us give them the help and support they so desperately need. I ask the Senate to join the House in this legislation and ask the President to sign it so that we can duly fulfill our obligation to the atomic veterans.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 49 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

Our hearts are thrilled, O gracious God, by the gift of renewal and refreshment in our lives, by a spirit that allows us to put aside any tired ways to find new energy, that permits a new attitude to correct habits and develop meaningful and profound ways of service. While we admit it is easier to follow old ways, we pray, O God, we will be open to Your guidance and be honest with ourselves and in harmony with You, our creator and redeemer.

This is our earnest prayer. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. LAHOOD] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. LAHOOD led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed bills and a concurrent resolution of the